

April 14, 1999:

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, Maryland 20852

9 3 8 2 '99 APR 21 A9 53

Re: Docket # 98N-1038, "Irradiation in the Production, Processing, and Handling of Food"

To Whom It May Concern:

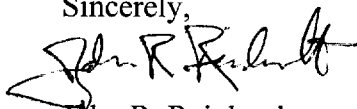
I am writing to ask you to retain the current labeling law, the current terminology of "treated with radiation" or "treated by irradiation," and the use of the radura symbol on all irradiated whole foods. This is an essential piece of information I use to make purchase decisions. I agree with the recommendation by the Center for Science in the Public Interest regarding labeling of irradiated foods: "any foods, or any foods containing ingredients that have been treated by irradiation, should be labeled with a written statement on the principal display panel indicating such treatment." Regarding the issue of labeling, in its initial petition, the FDA concluded that irradiation was a "material fact" about the processing of a food, and thus should be disclosed. The material fact remains; therefore, labeling should remain. Consumer acceptability, storage qualities, and nutrients are affected. Some irradiated foods have different texture and spoilage characteristics than untreated foods. Most fruits and vegetables have nutrient losses which are not obvious or expected by the consumer. In addition, processing by irradiation causes chemical changes that are not evident and are potentially hazardous. Meat, for example, may have a higher level of carcinogenic benzene. All irradiated foods contain unique radiolytic products that have never been tested.

Whether or not the FDA has approved irradiation as safe, it remains a new technology with no long-term human feeding studies. Consumers certainly have a right to know if this process has been used on their food. As to the kind of label used, I believe that label should be large enough to be readily visible to the consumer, on the front of the package.

The label contains important information regarding the processing of the contents. For displayed whole foods such as produce, a prominent informational display similar to that used for meats should be used (but containing the term "irradiation" and the radura).

Because of the newness of the technology and the need to assess the public health effects of widespread use of irradiated foods, I believe that the FDA's labeling requirement should not be permitted to expire. I urge you to place the comments received on the Internet so that the public can be informed about who is participating in this comment process.

Sincerely,



John R. Reinhardt
25A Cherry Street
Somerville, Massachusetts 02144

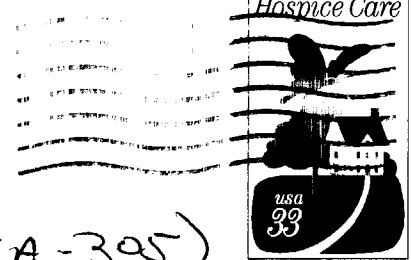
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FROM



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